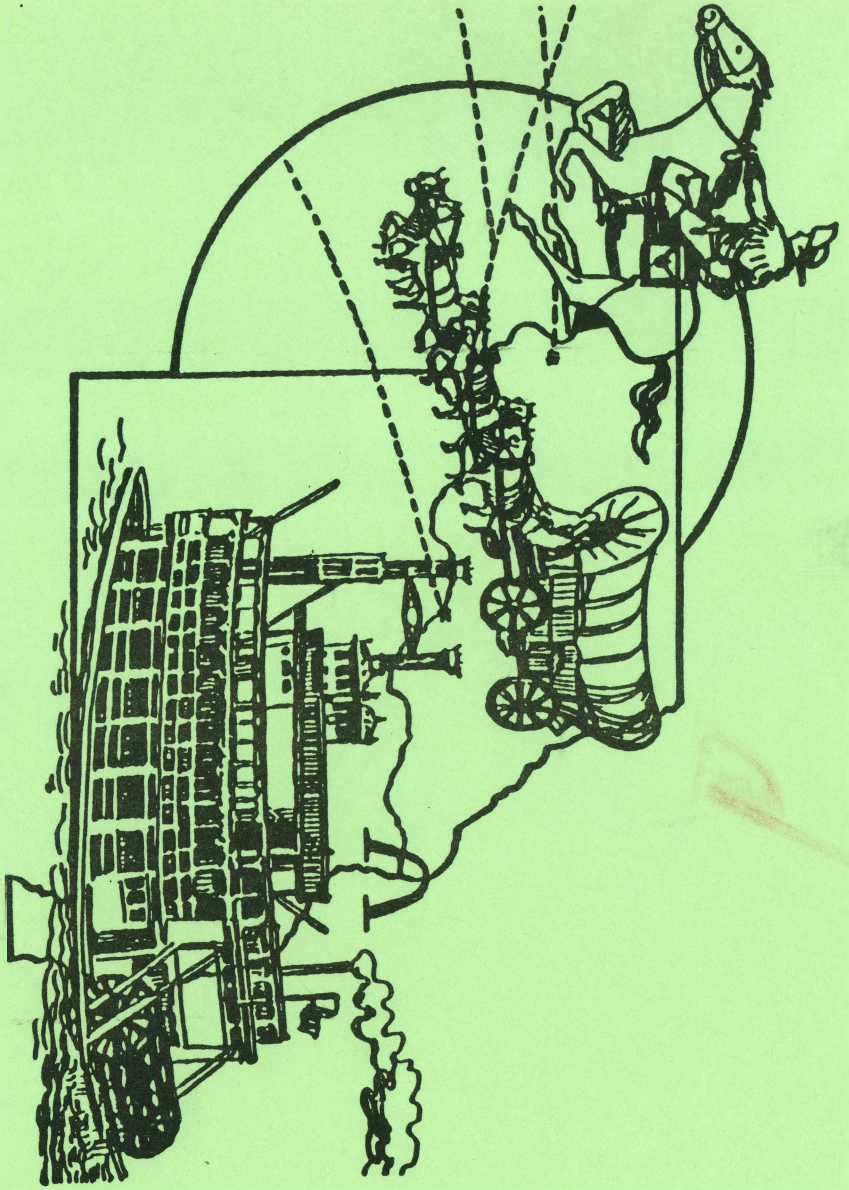
Fall 1989



Toward the Setting Sun....

TOWARD THE SETTING SUN

The Historical Journal

of

The United Methodist Church

The Missouri Area

Volume VIII, Number 1 Fall, 1989

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Making History.....1

Bishop Eugene M. Frank

Go West, Young Methodist.....10

J. C. Montgomery, Jr.

The New Madrid Earthquake and Missouri Methodists.....27

John O. Gooch

From the Editor:

I spent the Fourth of July weekend at the First Historical Convocation of the United Methodist Historical Society. The convocation was held at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, under the joint auspices of the Historical Society and the General Commission on Archives and History. The North American Section of the World Methodist Council also met in Lake Junaluska that weekend, so there was a lot of excitement.

Lake Junaluska is the site of the Southeastern Jurisdiction assembly, just as Mt. Sequoyah is for the South Central Jurisdiction. In addition, since it is an old Chautauqua center, it is home, or second home, for many United Methodists. Dr. Albea Godbold has made his home there for many years. Bishop Monk Bryan and Corneille moved there from Nebraska when he retired. One of the joys of being at Junaluska for a Missourian was to visit with those giants of our conference. I learned just this past week that a new wild flower walk is being constructed on the grounds and will be named in memory of Corneille Bryan.

Missourians were prominent at the convocation. Bishop Bryan presided over the banquet on Saturday night. On the same evening, Dr. Albea Godbold was honored by being given the first lifetime membership in the historical society. Dr. Godbold, of course, was for a time General Secretary of the Commission on Archives and History, the founding editor of Methodist History, and worked with Dr. Elmer T. Clark on the Encyclopedia of World

Methodism. Those of you who know Dr. Godbold will understand how much it was in character when he corrected Dr. Yrigoyen, who was reading his vita in presenting the award. Dr. Godbold pointed out that Chapel Hill, North Carolina, had been left out of the list of appointments he served. Not to be outdone, Dr. Yrigoyen responded that, in that case, there was a mistake in the Encyclopedia of World Methodism, for that was where he had found his material!

Jarrett and Mai Gray were among the Missouri contingent and their son, Jarrett, Jr. led one of the workshops. Bishop Bryan and Corneille were at every session. Dr. Albea Godbold, Dr. Thomas Frank, and Dr. John Gooch were the other Missourians who attended.

Speakers included Dr. Frank Baker, Dr. Richard Heitzenrater, Dr. Albert Outler. Without attempting to give any kind of summary of the addresses (they will all be printed in the winter issue of Methodist History), let me share a couple of notable quotes. In response to a question about his hope and prayer for the United Methodist Church for the next century, Dr. Baker said, "I hope the United Methodist Church is less tied up with discipline8 and more tied up with devotion and evangelism." In a similar vein, Dr. Outler said, "The way for United Methodists to become united is to focus on mission rather than on maintain ence." Dr. Outler also has died since the convocation.

One of the most fascinating workshops was on "Resources for Ethnic History", led by Jarrett Gray, Jr. He pointed out that

we have been a diverse church from the beginning, partly because of our missionary thrust and partly because of the emphasis on spreading scriptural holiness. We need to be even more intentional about recovering racial/ethnic history, to help us see where we have been and to grow beyond where we are.

Gray listed several areas in ethnic history in need of more research. What about the roles of women in the black Methodist tradition? We need more work on black churches in various conferences and states. What was the role of ethnic groups in movements such as temperance, labor, women's movements, civil rights, and so on?

There has been a good deal done on Native Americans, but most of it was done by white missionaries. We need more about Methodism from a Native American perspective. In Missouri, for example, one of the most powerful tribes was the Osage. What do we know about Methodist work with this nation? What do we know in the words of the Osage themselves? In recent issues of Toward the Setting Sun, we have published copies of letters written by several Missouri Methodist pastors who were missionaries to the Indians in Kansas. But what do we know about the mission from the mouths of the Indians?

With Hispanic and Asian work, we are talking more recent material, much of which is embedded in other works. In our own state, an account of what it was like to begin a Korean or a Filipino congregation in Missouri would be a fascinating story and an important part of Methodist history to be preserved. We

would be honored to work with any Asian or Hispanic congregation in Missouri in writing and publishing the story of the founding of their congregation.

Finally, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Uniting Conference of 1839 that brought together the Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal South, and Methodist Protestant churches. Our lead article in this issue is an address given by Bishop Eugene M. Frank at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of that conference. In November, there will be a special symposium at St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City on the topic, "The Uniting Conference of 1939: Its Influence, Impact, and Importance. The back page of the journal is a special flyer with information about the conference and how you can attend.

And what about future issues of this journal? We are delighted to have the able word processor of Jack Montgomery again providing us with articles. In the spring issue, we will feature an article by a new generation of Methodist historians in the Montgomery clan, John C. III. We hope, in future, to have a special feature in each issue called "Eyewitness to Missouri Methodist History", a series of short first-hand accounts of key moments in the Wesleyan movement in Missouri. That means your memories and your writing me a letter with a story. For example, what was it like to co-ordinate all the cookies for the 1988 General Conference? Who remembers what it

felt like to be a delegate to the 1970 special session of General Conference when there was a great push for equality of the races in the church? Who remembers the traumas of the former Evangelical United Brethren churches who were "swallowed up" by their Methodist brothers and sisters? Who remembers a special visit of an important personage to a small membership church? That's the kind of thing we'll be looking for.

Also, we're beginning now to plan for a special issue of the spread of scriptural holiness. What does scriptural holiness mean? How does it work out in practice? What is the relationship between scriptural holiness, the Social Principles, and social action? What were the effects of the Holiness Movement of the 19th century in Missouri?

As we begin our eighth year, we also begin a time of serious reflection on what it means to be a United Methodist and on ways to recover more and more of our heritage. If you'd like to be a part of any of that, or would like suggestions on how to get started, drop me a note at

5061 English Village Dr.
Nashville, TN, 37211.

I'd be more than happy to help you in any way I can.

John Hoch

MAKING HISTORY*

Bishop Eugene M. Frank

"Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We salute you in the Lord and in the fellowship of hosts of God's people."

With these words the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the President of the Methodist Protestant Church began the Episcopal address, opening the uniting conference on April 27, 1939.

And, the address continued:

"Eight million Methodist communicants and a constituency of over twenty million adherents stand at attention today as this united conference throws open wide gates to a new era in American church life. The entire Protestantism of the nation turns eager eyes toward this city. No more notable and responsible Christian body has ever assembled on this continent than this uniting conference. The authority of the churches which you represent has bestowed upon you by legal and constitutional procedure and action the great and grave responsibility of building the governmental structure of the new Methodist church out of the polity and practice that inheres in the three uniting churches. You are to set the course for a powerful ecclesiastical organization upon its high and holy mission. God only, in his wisdom, might and love, can make you equal to this task and obligation."

A preacher who proposes to speak on an occasion like this must be aware of several things.

First, he must be aware of the awesome task of recon-

*(Ed note: this article was an address given by Bishop Frank at the 50th anniversary of the Uniting Conference, May 19, 1989. It is printed here with his permission.

ciliation that covered the entire period of 110 years, as four or five generations of Methodists sought to bring healing and unity to the wide-open and often deeply infested wounds of a century of separation, if not actual alienation.

A large group of earnest Methodists were filled with a desire to form a more democratic church in which laity would play as important a role as clergy in polity and decision-making. They withdrew to form the Methodist Protestant Church in 1828.

In 1844, several years of intense feeling came to a climax in the further division of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was formed. This was a time when earnest, able and devout people were seeking to preserve a united church in spite of the deep currents of political, economic and social forces that were dividing the entire nation.

Anyone who supposes that the task of reconciliation and union was easy would not understand either the secular history of the war between the states, or the deep devotion members of the various churches held for their own traditions. The task of union was often heart-breaking. Those persons striving to work at it were met with disappointment and disillusionment and more than once were threatened with despair. The fact that it could be accomplished as early as 1939 was a miracle of God's grace.

In retrospect the uniting conference brought Methodists

into a kind of mutually acceptable federation. The price of reconciliation was the establishment of seven churches, six defined by geography and one defined by race. They were bound together at the top levels of bureaucracy, as they are today, by an uneasy relationship. With the dissolution of the central, or racial, jurisdiction, we are now a federation of six churches. We are bound together by a Book of Discipline, while in practice and often in polity as well as theology, there are widely differing interpretations from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Our sociologists can quickly identify these differences and their regional character.

In the second place, one must be fully aware of the dynamics at work within the churches in the year 1939, in terms of the understanding of what it means for the church to be in mission.

The uniting conference had one purpose, and only one---the uniting of three denominational structures and polities into one structure.

Yet it was impossible for the preachers and conference leaders to avoid something of a challenge to the assembly to look beyond structure and polity to the reason for the existence of a people called Methodist. In all candor we Methodists have many faults and what Ben Garrison years ago called "Warts and all." But, from the beginning, we have never feared to ask "What are we here for?" We recall that this was the first question asked in 1784, in Baltimore. The gathered Methodist

preachers simply asked "What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up Methodist preachers?"

And their reply was "To reform the continent and spread scriptural holiness throughout the land."

Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes gave the concluding address of the conference just before the declaration of union was voted. His closing words are both dramatic in terms of the emotions that stirred the delegates in that climactic moment, and they may be prophetic in terms of where Methodism has gone in the past fifty years. His words tell us a little of what the new church thought about its mission. Here are some of his words:

> "This matter of our united church is too sacred for any literary climax. We must now transfer it to the rhetoric of action. We should go forward into the mightiest and most constructive movements that Methodists have ever promoted in the name of Christ. We must say to sinners of whatever kind that we know a name, a saving name. We must pray---pray---pray. We must evangelize---evangelize---and evangelize. We must carry a throbbing Gospel beyond all rivers and oceans and mountains. In the ceaseless program of redemption inspired by our Lord, we must go on with the proclamation of grace, until the last rebel against the infinite mercy of the Most High lays down his arms of mutiny and cries out---I yield---I yield---I can hold out no longer. "

Evangelism, which received such emphasis in both the Episcopal address and the closing message by Bishop Hughes, remains a cause spoken of with high rhetoric. It is the subject of many books even in the last few years. But the root causes of membership decline and the failure of all programmatic solutions to flagging evangelistic zeal, have never yet been addressed by the leadership of our church, or by our theological and biblical scholars. Evangelize---evangelize---evan-

gelize---Our social scientists explain our loss of membership by demographics---our bureaucracy presents us with more than one programmatic solution. But anyone can see that we do not believe in evangelism. Our failure is theological and biblical Evangelism is simply not important, let alone urgent.

What a road we have traveled since 1739, when Wesley says a group of persons sought his spiritual help and guidance that they might be saved from the wrath of a righteous God. More persons came the next day and still others in days later, and societies had to be formed to care for those seeking salvation.

If this is the beginning of Methodist societies, what is to be the end?

In the third place, on this occasion of remembrance, we must be aware of the challenge with which the new church went forth to conquer. This is to say that the Episcopal message and many of the other sermons and addresses were a little more than slightly tinged with triumphalism. Perhaps they all deserved that privilege. It was a great hour. It represented a tremendous achievement in reconciliation. The Bishops wrote:

"Today, the Methodist Church is a church of historic faith, order and structure with a religious life, thought, movement, and zeal that are distinctive and dynamic. Herein lies its significance, its obligation and its power. Such a church, such a position and possibility in fulfillment of its divine mission, can build itself into the life of America and of the world. Men await its coming as those who watch for the morning. Awake, awake. Put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord, as in the ancient days."

The address concluded: "The Methodist Church sets forth anew upon a great adventure. Whither, and to what end?

"The master of a ship at sea each day at noon finds his bearings, sets his course and steams ahead. This is a parable. Methodism---a mighty vessel---in mid-ocean---a precious cargo. Whither, and to what end?"

Many years later, a church historian examined the mind and heart of laity and clergy in 1939. He wrote:

"They believed with heart, mind, soul and strength in the distinctive life of Methodists. They were not called to be good, but to be perfect. The discipline life of holy living was preached, if not practiced, by both clergy and laity.

"They believed in the indispensable Gospel. Faith and commitment to Jesus Christ was a matter of life and death. Eternal life was not a matter of universal salvation. It was the gift of God through belief in Jesus Christ.

"They believed in the irrevocable mission of Jesus Christ. To experience the risen Christ was to be filled with a passion for souls who will be lost unless they hear the Gospel."

Tonight we celebrate the reconciliation that took place 50 years ago in Kansas City. We honor the men and women who prayed for this union and made many sacrifices to bring it about.

We remind ourselves in the words of Bishop William T. Watkins, who had only been elected by the South church in 1938, that the event they were celebrating in 1939 belonged to their fathers and not to them. He continued, "It is their history, not ours. And, if we insist that it is our history, then we have to ask what a new generation will honor in our stewardship

of God's family in years to come."

When I read that, I was jolted into a period of reflection and no little confusion. Just where are we 50 years later? Have we fulfilled any of their dreams? Have we been faithful to the vision they believed they had received from God?

A wise man once said that a church that is truly open to the work and leading of the Holy Spirit is in no position to chart a course for the future. Perhaps, like the missionary journeys of St. Paul, we are interrupted again and again in our planning, and sent off in another direction by the Holy Spirit.

Could some of our prophetic voices be correct? Are we acting today more like the Church of England acted in Wesley's day?

Is that the reason every great spiritual awakening has begun with some primary, elemental purpose so that the future would be in the hands of the Holy Spirit?

For instance, Jesus choosing his disciples, not to form a church, but simply to be with him! Telling them to be witnesses, not about his confrontations in the temple, or even about his teachings, but witnesses to his resurrection. Commanding them to go into the world and turn God's enemies into his friends. How do you do that, Lord? What is the program for that? Has someone written a paper about that?

John Wesley bidding Asbury goodbye, telling him to "offer them Christ"! No particulars, no committees, no struc-

ture, no power of authority. Just primary, elemental orders, and even when they asked Jesus what they should say when they were brought before courts of judgment, Jesus simply replied, Don't worry, the Holy Spirit will tell you what to say and what to do.

So, 50 years after the uniting conference, our life for the future must be charted, not in some institutional planetarium, but out under the wide open sky, where we can discern God's righteous judgment and his infinite grace.

Methodism---still a mighty vessel with resources not available in 1939. Still on a wide and perhaps even more turbulent sea. A precious cargo, the life-changing Gospel of our living Christ. But whither, and to what end?

As the service closed on the evening of May 10, 1939, the delegates seemed to know who they were and where they were going. In anticipation of the future and with you and praise in their hearts, they affirmed their purpose in these words:

"Compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses, we do here and now consecrate the Methodist Church to the worship of God and the establishment of his Kingdom among men everywhere. Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

And the massed choirs and the whole congregation rose to sing the Hallelujah Chorus.

This is their history, It is not ours. Ours is not to look back to but ask what the Holy Spirit will have us do and be in our day. Our fervent prayer must be, O baptize us afresh

with the life-giving spirit of Jesus, that like our crucified Lord, we may mount up by the way of the cross to a higher glory.

GO WEST, YOUNG METHODIST

Excerpts from the travel journal of John M. Langhorne

Annotated by J. C. Montgomery, Jr.

> I left home on the 11th of September 1841 for the purpose of visiting Missouri with the ultimate view of moving thither if pleased with the country.

Thus begins the brief travel journal of John M. Langhorne, a young man who had resided in the early 19th century in Lynchburg, Virginia. We know little about Langhorne except that he was an ardent Methodist and in all probability a member of the Masonic Order. His journal, a small leather-bound notebook with sewn pages, was sent to me several years ago by Robert B. Carman of Oakland, California, who had found it in a collection of old books. There was also a hymnal, Methodist Hymns, which on the cover bore the gold stamped name, "Mary M. Langhorne", probably the wife of John W. Langhorne. There will be comments later about the hymnal, which was the authorized publication of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1844.

Some of the entries in the journal are illegible, perhaps the effects of time and climate. The paper is soft and fragile so it is surprising that the volume has endured this century and a half. Where the exact word cannot be discerned, I have indicated the space by .... The spelling has been left as it was written, recognizing the fact that the spelling of names and places varied widely through the early days of our nation.

If the modern word is included, it follows in parentheses. With this introduction, we resume journal entries.

> Leaving Lynchburg I traveled the river road via Natural Bridge, Covington, Va. This is rather an uninteresting road with the exception of a few of nature's grand works, the first of which is the passage of the James River through the Blue Rigge (sic). Speculating a bit it seems that there might have been a mighty gathering of waters above the Blue Ridge before a passage could have been effected through the vast mountains which overhang either side. The next object of curiosity is the Natural Bridge, the sublimity and grandeur of this far exceeded my expectations. A small stream passes underneath an arch on which the turnpike passes some 250 feet above it, the length of the arch about 150, breadth not more than 60 or 70 feet with a deep ravine....on either side.

Our traveler writes of passing various springs (Dibrell, White Sulphur, Blue Sulphur).

> The water in all the springs has very much the same taste. The names (of the springs) are given by the color of the sediment in the water of each respectively. Sulphuretted hydrogen, I should suppose, is the principal gas in each as the smell very much resembles that of a rotten egg, the offensive scent of which is owing to the presence of that gas.

In some of the papers and receipts found in the journal, Langhorne is referred to as "Dr." Perhaps he had studied medicine under a preceptor or apprentice system. At any event this might account for his scientific curiosity and concern about health.

> I am now the 17th about 78 miles from Charleston Kanawha, a close rainy day, not disposed to travel.

We should remember that West Virginia did not become a state until the Civil War, although there was some earlier effort to

create a state called "Westsylvania." Charleston was (and is) the principal city on the Kanawha River. Langhorne used this rest day for meditation:

> I have been often reminded by incidents on the road of the Christian's journey to the heavenly inheritance. If feel thankful for the protection still afforded me by a kind Providence and that I still desire to love and serve that God who gave me being and all the blessings of life.

He must have continued in this contemplative mood for some days:

> Septr. 25th. Through mercy I am still preserved. Yesterday I was 33 years old, nearly half of 3 score and 10. How short is life should I be granted so long. God grant that I may spend it all to thy service! Should death come sooner, still may I be prepared for it.

He resumes his travels the next day.

> About noon of the last day I wrote it ceased to rain and we traveled 27 miles the next day. We reached the Kanawha River and as one of the natural curiosities I must mention the Hawk's Nest. It is a projection of rock apparently directly over the river but it is very deceptive. While it seems that if you were to fall from the rock, you would alight in the river yet it requires very great exertion of strength to project a stone as far as the river....I succeeded after many unsuccessful efforts in throwing a stone some 30 or forty feet into the river. After crossing the Alleghany and seeing the waters run toward the west, it is difficult for me to recollect that we were going down stream and after traveling miles down the Kanawha, I would invariably speak of things we saw down the river. The Kanawha bottom seems to be very fertile and covered with corn with now and then a meadow from which an enormous quality of hay had been mown. This is too limited a country, surrounded on either hand with ranges of mountains and affording scarcely an outlet except up or down the river. The immense quantity of salt made at the Salines above Charleston gives

> the Kanawha an importance and interest, of which it would be entirely destitute without them.
>
> Charleston is a place of some importance and has several very good churches, one of which we visited on Sabbath 19th and heard a very good sermon from Brother Huestis (Eustis?) who was traveling with us.

This is the first mention that Langhorne was journeying with a party, but this was the common practice, both for reasons of companionship and safety alike.

A further entry illustrates the religious devotion of Langhorne.

> We reached...(Guindotte?) on Monday night. It is quite a flourishing little town on the Ohio River, and Methodism is still more flourishing here and in the surrounding country than in the town itself.

Richard Carwardine of the University of Sheffield writes of the phenomenal growth of Methodism in the early 19th century. "Numbering only 73,000 members in 1800, the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) grew at a rate that terrified other religious bodies, reached a membership of a quarter of a million by 1820, doubled its members in the following decade, penetrated into every quarter of the country...and became the largest denomination in America."[1] Thus we can understand if a note of triumphalism creeps into our traveler's writings from time to time.

> The circuit preacher was preaching when we got there, we went into the church and felt perfectly at home and was struck with the force of the sentiment that Methodism is every where the same. There seemed to be a good prospect for a revival, some 7 or 8 mourners at the altar for prayer.
>
> When we reached (the undecipherable name of the

t

> own), we could refer back to the rain which stopped us in the mountains with peculiar pleasure for the Ohio (river) which but the day before we reached it was fordable and not all boatable had risen several feet, and to our great delight, a steam boat came puffing up to the wharf. The next morning a little after light and soon after breakfast started back down the Ohio with ourselves and some dozen or more other passengers among who was a sister of cousin John I. Langhorne and her son (Mr. and Mrs. Fay) with whom we became quite well acquainted, and this relationship was cordially recognized.
>
> We reached Portsmouth that afternoon, a very flourishing little town, on the Ohio side and there got on larger and finer boat for Cincinnati. We called at Maysville on Tuesday morning, went to the house of the widow of our much beloved and lamented cousin John T. Langhorne. She received us very cordially and invited us to stay several days in Maysville and we have since regretted not doing so as we have been detained that length of time in Cincinnati. We got to Cincinnati tuesday (sic) evening and had to remain till...Thursday evening under promises from the Captain of the boat to be off every hour 36 or more and the great demonstrations of starting reminded me very forcible of a piece in The Christian Repository by Bishop Morriss (actually Morris) on travelling. Such ringing of bells, blowing off steam, and hanging out of sight (?). Some relief, however, to our impatience to be on the go, was afforded by the fact that we had a better opportunity of seeing the beautiful Queen City of the West & indeed Cincinnati is quite a lovely place, much more so than I had any idea. It reminds me more of Philadelphia than any place I have visited. And that is saying all that could be asked of it.
>
> We visited the Methodist Book Concern at this place. It is quite a splendid establishment. We were there introduced to Rev. Mr. Hamline, editor of the Ladies' Repository, a very interesting man and said to be one of the finest preachers in the west, though we had no opportunity of judging for ourselves.[2]

On the inside cover of the notebook, Langhorne notes that he paid $19 for a big coat (greatcoat?) in Cincinnati. He also

lists the "clothes carried with me to Missouri:"

> One coat 2 vests - 2 pair pantaloons 4 shirts - 2 pair drawers - 4 bosoms - 11 collars - 3 pair socks - a pair ristbands (sic; perhaps wristlet, a band sometimes worn for additional warmth on the arm).

It is of interest that his steamboat fare to Portsmouth was $3.00, thence to Cincinnati another $3.00, from Ft. Pitt (half way from Cincinnati to Louisville, "passage $12.00." While traveling by horseback to Charleston, hotel or house lodging would be $1.00 or $1.15, turnpike tolls twelve and a half to eighteen and a half cents! There are other entries for "ferriage and toll." In cincinnati, he purchased a map for $1.00.

Langhorne notes that the boat rocks so much he must quit writing. He resumes on "Octr 4th 1841:"

> After writing the above, we went on to Louisville and arrived there at night and laid at the wharf until 12 o'clock the next day. Louisville is a very flourish place and large but not near so neat as Cincinnati. It was Sabbath when we left, and I was pained at the real desecration of that holy day. The drays were crowding the wharves, and horrid oaths being emitted from the mouths of their drivers, but to the honor of the city this only extended to the first street, and further up in the place the bells were tolling & the people moving quietly to their respective places of worship and oh! how we did long to join them, but these public conveyances know nothing of the sabbath, and one is obliged to yield to their mandate but in the midst of all he may be retired on the boat and read and pray as much as he pleases though sad experience has taught me that there is great difficult in preserving one's equanimity or Christian steadfastness on such occasions.

> After leaving Louisville we encountered great difficulties from sandbars & the lowness of the water, & did not reach St. Louis until the next Friday after noon--5 days--which passage in good water is usually accomplished in 3 days. I find that steam boat navigation on the Ohio, Mississippi, & Missouri rivers is much more difficult than I had supposed, particularly in summer, & this has been a peculiarly unfortunate year for them.
>
> We saw between the mouth of the Ohio and St. Louis 8 or 10 boats that have been wrecked this year and most of them in the last few weeks from snags in the river. Indeed the river is forever changing its course & sweeping trees & everything into its rapid and turbulent current. We are now laying by the farm of an old man who has in this way lost 30 acres of land of immense value, for the soil all along up the river where it is washing is of unknown depth & surprising fertility. The loss from steam boats and their cargoes on the Mississippi river alone is said to be not less this year than half a million dollars.

Our westward traveler arrives in St. Louis, although the journal does not record the day. He is favorably impressed by the "Gateway to the West."

> St. Louis is a place of great beauty & considerable cleanliness. The only detraction is the narrowness of the streets down near the water. This part was settled by the French, & all the streets further out are broad & handsomely laid off. Cincinnati is now called Queen of the West, but St. Louis I think is destined to take her name. It is now the great centre of trade for all the far west & can but increase & grow. I think that St. Louis is a very dear place (expensive?), but I beg leave to differ with those who think so, for whilst I did not price a great many things, those I did price were as cheap as elsewhere, & the great staff of life, bread, was as low as could be asked. Corn one dollar a barrel & bacon 4 cents the pound. We remained at St. Louis 24 hours, & left in the steam boat "Emilie."

Langhorne notes that while in St. Louis he paid $1.50 for "stock." This could have meant anything from provisions (since

he also bought fruit) to a share in some venture or, perhaps, even a cravat. He also made the purchase of a life preserver for $3.50. His passage up the Missouri River to Glasgow was $10.00, paid to a Captain Kaiser.

This voyage began with a mishap, provoking more religious reflection from Langhorne:

> This evening (Monday 4th Oct) we struck a crag & sprung a leak which stops us for the night & I know not how much longer. It is but a poor tribute to record (we trust with sincere gratitude) the goodness of God in preserving our life & health in the midst of so many and fearful dangers. May we never cease to praise the Lord for his goodness & mercy!
>
> We succeeded in pumping off the water & getting to Boonville the fifth & contrary to our original intention we determined to go on to Glasgow in Howard County, learning that an old acquaintance, friend brother (Masonic?), Edwin Lewis, resided near that place, & accordingly on the 6th we reached his house & were received with open arms. We were delighted with the country about his house & at once determined if there was much of the Missouri soil like his to move there. We were particularly struck with the great improvement in his condition by his removal, he left in Buckingham, a ridge that would scarcely produce black eyed peas, & here owns land as rich as any whatever. Here I saw land that has been in cultivation for 30 years in succession & has a finer crop on it than I ever saw on James River low grounds. The lands in Howard are very fine, mostly woodland, but very high priced, which precludes the idea of moving to this country.
>
> On the 7th we (?) left Howard & went over the river into Saline County. Here we saw for the first time a prairie, of which we had formed an incorrect idea. We expected to see a perfectly level plain, but on the contrary the land was beautifully undulating, enough so to carry off the water without washing & sufficiently level for all the purposes of farming. Saline, unlike Howard abounds in prairie & is rather scarce of timber. It must be principally

owned by wealthy farmers. On account of its large prairies & the great scarcity of timber for many smaller farms, here the society is very good, made up principally of Virginians, to a great many Methodists.

The soil is remarkably fertile, hemp, tobacco, corn, wheat and oats in great abundance. In fine everything almost which can be mentioned. This county abounds also in salt springs, making it one of the finest stock raising counties in the state, which was evinced by the superior quality of the stock of all kinds. Here we saw many of our old acquaintances---Charles Bondurant from Cumberland, James Brown from Buckingham, & Daniel Snoddy from Buckingham. Mr. Snoddy received a small patrimony in Buckingham & moved about 9 years since to Missouri; he now owns 700 acres of first rate land, works only 2 hands, a man & woman & clears from their labor 600 dollars annually. We give this as a specimen of what may be done in Missouri farming.

I should have mentioned also Mr. Gilliam from Buckingham. He works 7 hands, large & small, & made this year from 90 thousand tobacco hills, between 30 & 40 thousand pounds of tobacco, and last year made 15,400 pounds from 10 acres a hand cultivate. Mr. Gilliam only sowed 5 bushels of wheat & made 150 bushels of fine quality. From what I saw I would judge the quantity of help raised in the county to be greater than nay other which we visited.

Most of Langhorne's travels were now to be on horseback. While in Glasgow he had purchased a horse for $80.00 plus a blanket and whip for $2.00. He tells of going on to Lafayette County, calling it

...one of the richest in the state. In this county timber is rather more abundant than in Saline, but well interspersed with prairie. The flourishing town of Lexington is in this county, but one great objection to it is that the Campbellites are the prevailing denomination, indeed they are very numerous in the whole upper Missouri. We went from Lexington to brother Callaway's, a local preacher from Campbell County, Va. He is take him altogether a man after my own

heart. His house is the only private residence I saw in the country that has a room in it without a bed. That will convey some idea of the improvements in building & the great disposition of the farmers to neglect everything for the soil & its production.
From Lafayette we went down to Columbus in Johnson county. Here we heard for the first time a Campbellite preach (they do not call themselves Campbellites but Christians or disciples). He took for his text--"Go ye into all the world, &c." "He that believeth & is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned," & of course gave us the peculiar doctrines of his sect. He did not deny the influence of the Spirit but made it necessarily follow immersion & made that the entering door into the new covenant or kingdom as he was pleased to call it. He preached strongly against the impropriety of falling from grace & was an advocate for free communion. His theory seemed quite plausible from the ingenious method in which he advanced it, & hence its great danger---the danger of taking water baptism for conversion or a change of heart & being satisfied in the belief that there is no other change to be expected.

We heard a story in connection with this subject which we will give in illustration. A physician in Lexington joined the Campbellites, & was asked after being baptized if he felt any change, he replied that he felt no other change but from a dry man to a wet one !

Historians have commented on the spread of the nation along the rivers, indeed the waters were often referred to as "highways." The battle of Lexington, twenty years later, was fought because Union forces were determined to keep the Missouri River a "Federal highway." Langhorne makes interesting comments about the Missouri counties and communities which were not on the river.

From Columbus we went up through Johnson into Jackson (county). The lands in Johnson though

good are much inferior to those in the counties bordering on the river & the inhabitants seem to have less energy and enterprise than those nearer to market. Their farms and therefore not so productive & their improvements not so great. Their mental cultivation is also much more neglected & their morals of course not of so elevated a character.

Jackson county is certainly one among the richest in the state & its county seat Independence quite a respectable place, though somewhat at a stand as to improvement. From this place we crossed over into Clay county of which Liberty is the county seat & quite a flourishing place though too far from the Missouri river ever to be of any great importance. Here we were only 25 miles from Platte City in Platte county said to be a fine county but completely filled up, though the land is not yet in market. We did not visit it as this is no time to settle there, but it is supposed that great speculation may be made when the lands come in market as it is thought probable that not a third of the settlers will be able to pay the government price for their quarter section (160 acres) which their ... entitles them to.

On the road from Liberty to Richmond in Ray county (some 30 miles) we met 30 or 40 waggons (sic) going to the Platte purchase with settlers mostly from Indiana & a shabby looking set they truly were. Ray county has fine lands in it & much cheaper than the forenamed counties....said to be altogether so healthy though I could perceive no difference in the appearance of the people. Richmond is the county seat & is surrounded with a fine country & rich farmers. Near this begins the rich bottom land known lower down by the name of Sugar Tree bottom. The prairie is some 60 miles long & 6 or 8 wide with timber on each side, the river being on one & the timber bluffs on the other side. This is certainly the richest body of land I ever saw & if it be health (which the inhabitants affirm to be the case) must in time be one of the finest portions of upper Missouri.

We traveled through the greater part of this bottom which is called in different portions of it by different names---as Sugar Tree, Crooked River, and Walking.... We attended a temperance meeting in the bottom organized through the instrumentality of

> Wm C Ligon a baptist minister from Virginia & Dr. Austin. We staid on Saturday night with Dr. Austin and learnt from him more of the Mormon difficulty than we had ever before heard. We had supposed them to be a persecuted people, but really the life and property of other persons was so constantly exposed to destruction from their infatuated notions (inspired by their great leader Joe Smith) that the whole country was theirs by a special gift of God, that I am not surprised they were hunted as wild beasts and driven out from Missouri.

Mormonism (officially "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints") was founded by Joseph Hyrum Smith in 1830 after his experiences of the preceding decade which saw his revelations, the gift of the so-called "gold plates," and the composition (translation) of the Book of Mormon (published 1830). In 1831 Smith moved to Kirtland, Ohio, where a temple was built. Because of popular opposition, the headquarters was removed to Missouri where a colony had been established in 1831 Opposition arose in Missouri also, and in the winter of 1839 12,000 people were driven from this state and took refuge in Illinois, making the city of Nauvoo their headquarters. In less than a decade they were again to face persecution and begin the long trek to Great Salt Lake Valley in Utah.

Langhorne laments his inability to find a place to buy:

> Carroll County more of this bottom than any other county, & for the great quantity of military bounty land within its bounds...(the title to which can be come at) would be among the first counties of the state. We crossed the Missouri at Greenville (not to be confused with the later Greenville in Wayne County JCH). I was again in Saline County through which we hastened to Glasgow in Howard & from thence to the county seat Fayette.

> This is a flourishing town, here the Methodists have college buildings, but the school has not yet gone into operation. It is, I believe, to be auxiliary to St. Charles College. At this place the Campbellites are very numerous. A discussion was going on between a Campbellite preacher & a Methodist preacher at the time we were there. The name of the Campbellite preacher was Lancaster, of the other Johnson(?). They seemed, I thought, to be pretty well matched, although I would say, did I not believe myself partial, that the Methodist had the advantage of him in the argument. Whilst we listened to them, the point at issue whilst we listened was infant baptism & the covenant.

Our traveler leaves the Methodist-Disciples controversy to resume his journey.

> We went through Howard & crossed at Boonville into Cooper County. I passed Boonville before in the night, hence said little about it. This is quite a flourishing place & but for the fine state house which had been built in Jefferson City, there would be grounds to believe that the seat of government would be moved to this place, though as it now is there is not much probability of the thing.
>
> We went out twenty five miles to Mr. Charles E. Rice in Cooper. He has a fine tract of land of 2000 acres, enough to make all of his children perfectly independent, when if he had staid in Virginia he could not much have given them a bare support. They were delighted to see us. Mrs. Rice is dissatisfied because she has not her old neighbors around her, though her health is much better than it was in Virginia. Indeed I have seen many females whose health had been very bad in Virginia restored to perfect health by their removal to this country oweing (sic) I suppose to the change in climate & in their habits, having more to attend to than in Virginia.

This Missouri adventure was about to come to an end---for now. Langhorne records a few concluding sentences in this journal.

> We returned to Boonville the 1st day of November & on the 2nd about noon left for St. Louis, & on the 4th reached that port & left the next for Cincinnati, which place we reached on the 9th and left the 10th at 11 o'clock for ...

There are some scattered entries, mostly undecipherable, on succeeding pages. Some of these may not be in the handwriting of J.M. Langhorne, but all pages appear to be water damaged.

The mystery of the Virginia traveler awaits further investigation. There is a torn receipt of "1st Dec 1842" for $15.00 received in payment from Dr. John M. Langhorne, trustee for Susan C. Branch, for purchases of "May 20 -1 4 1/2 ' bedstead @ $7.00, 2...(pillows?) @ $1.00, and 2 low (?) steads @ $7.00." The location of the merchants, Thomas & Bradley, is not written A second receipt is dated "Decr 7th, 1842; it again is a payment on behalf of Mrs. Susan C. Branch, for whom Dr. J. M. Langhorne is trustee. The item was 3 1/2 bushels of corn at $1.00 a barrel, the amount $6.50.

Langhorne did return to Missouri. On April 1st, 1847, in Lexington, Missouri, he signed a promissory note to the "Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Ancient Masons of the State of Missouri" for $20.00, payable two years from date. Evidently the debt was paid before the time because the amount of $25.07 is written on the bottom of the instrument. Since this was Note No. 625, one wonders if there were much activity of that sort then, the present Grand Lodge of Missouri having no power to do so now.

The missing chapters from the life of this young Methodist

from Virginia must await more research. We know that he did not stay in Missouri. An assessor's receipt from San Jose, Santa Clara, California, dated June 30, 1876 tells of receiving $4.10 from J. M. Langhorne for personal property taxes, the 1876-77 year. At least our former Virginian was an owner of property assessed at $515.00. At some time this saga will be continued.

Addendum

Earlier in this paper mention was made of the 1844 hymnal entitled Methodist Hymns, bearing the gold-stamped name of Mary M. Langhorne. This book was authorized by the General Conference of the above year, notable because the meeting made almost certain that there would be a division into northern and southern churches. The book was printed at Cincinnati and was distributed through the Methodist Book Concern there, of which J.F. Wright and Leroy Swormstedt were Publishing Agents. All five bishops of the church---Joshua Soule, Elijah Hedding, James O. Andrew, Beverly Waugh, and Thomas A. Morris---were present, and their names appear in the introduction to the hymnal.

The hymnal consisted of 587 hymns, but there were others contained in the book in sections entitled "Additional Hymns" and "Supplement." It is interesting that "Amazing Grace", long a favorite of Methodists, appears in the last section. This

hymnal contains words only---the accompaniment being in The Harmonist---and makes fascinating and sometimes grim reading. But this was the theology of frontier Methodism in the first half of the 19th century. It represented the faith of the evangelistic church that spread into every corner of the United States. It was a faith carried not alone by the much-honored circuit riders but also by dedicated lay people such as the Langhornes.

NOTES

1. Richey, Russell E., and Rowe, Kenneth E., Rethinking Methodist History. Nashville: Kingswood Press, 1985 Article by Richard Carwardine, "Methodist Ministers and the Second Party," P. 134

2. The Western Book Concern was established by Bishop Robert R. Roberts in 1820. In 1836 the General Conference authorized this Book Concern to acquire property for a printing office, book room, and bindery. Heretofore the only book concern had been in New York City.

   Leonidas Hamline came from old New England stock. Himself a native of Connecticut, he "went west" to Ohio in the 1820s, where he was admitted to the bar. Following a conversion experience in 1828, he became a local preacher, joining the Ohio Conference in 1832. In 1836 he was appointed assistant editor of the Western Christian Advocate. In 1841 he became editor of the Ladies Repository (and Gatherings of the West). This 64-page magazine came to be called the "Queen of the Monthlies" and achieved a circulation of some 40,000. Hamline himself was a delegate to General Conference in 1840 and was elected bishop in 1844. Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota is named for him.

3. St. Charles College had been formed in 1836. The first Methodist institution in Fayette was Howard High School organized in 1844. Debates were a common feature of frontier life and Methodists were ready and willing to join in the religious fray.

"THE UNITING CONFERENCE OF 1939: ITS INFLUENCE, IMPACT, AND IMPORTANCE"

* *

November 1-2, 1989
St. Paul School of Theology
Kansas City, Missouri

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The **"Uniting Conference of 1939,"** which brought into being the former Methodist Church, was a major milestone in the history of the denomination. This fall, a **symposium** dealing with issues relating to that event will be held on the campus of St. Paul School of Theology, located at 5123 Truman Road in Kansas City, Mo. The symposium will begin on **Wednesday, November 1** after the noon meal and conclude on **Thursday, November 2**, prior to the noon meal. **Registration** for this event, which will offer Continuing Education credit, has been set at **$25.00** per person.

The core of the symposium will be papers presented by five leaders. They include:

Dr. Rosemary Skinner Keller of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, who will be focusing on issues of "women's history" through the career of Georgia Harkness, one of the delegates to the 1939 conference.

Dr. Gerald F. Moede, former executive of the Consultation on Church Union, who will be speaking to the impact of the "Uniting Conference" on ecumenical and episcopal concerns in the church.

Bishop James S. Thomas, retired bishop of The United Methodist Church, who will be dealing with issues related to the former "Central Jurisdiction" in The Methodist Church.

Dr. Rob Sladge, President of the United Methodist Historical Society, who will address the matter of southern opposition and resistance to church union in 1939.

Dr. E. Dale Dunlap, retired academic dean of St. Paul School of Theology, who will present a paper analyzing the influence of the jurisdictional system on the subsequent life of the church.

Each presentation will be followed by a time for conversation and discussion on the issues raised.

The afternoon session on November 1 and the morning session on November 2 are planned for the "Social Hall" in the "Center for Renewal" on the campus of St. Paul School of Theology. The evening session on November 1, featuring Bishop James Thomas, will be held in Kresge Chapel on the campus. This session will be open to the public without charge.

Lodging and meals will be available at a modest cost in the Center for Renewal. For more information (and registration materials when they become available), please contact:

Dr. Susan Vogel
St. Paul School of Theology
5123 Truman Road
Kansas City, MO. 64127

or

Dr. Mark Conard
Committee on Archives and History
2801 Coolidge
Wichita, KS. 67204

Advance registration may be sent at $25.00/person, with checks made payable to "St. Paul School of Theology."

THE NEW MADRID EARTHQUAKE

AND MISSOURI METHODISM

John O. Gooch

In the early morning hours of December 16, 1811, a severe earthquake hit the southeast Missouri area. The settlers fled their flimsy cabins, their chimneys and roofs often falling about their ears. Early in the morning another severe shock hit. "The ground rose and fell as earth waves, like the long, low swell of the sea, passed across its surface, tilting the trees until their branches interlocked and opening the soil in deep cracks as the surface was bent." [1] Great waves roared down the Mississippi River, washing boats high on the shore, breaking off trees and carrying them away. Islands or parts of islands disappeared entirely.

For a couple of days the shocks continued intermittently, but not with the intensity of the first ones. On January 23, another great shock hit, with several more destructive ones coming on February 7. The last of these was perhaps more severe than any of the previous ones. Small aftershocks continued for nearly a year.[2]

The center of the earthquake was apparently west of Crowley Ridge, along a northeast-southwest fault. The area most severely affected by the quake extended from a point west of

Cairo, Illinois on the north to the latitude of Memphis on the south, some 100 miles. East and west it extended from Crowley Ridge on the west to Chickasaw Bluffs on on the east, a distance of 50 miles. This large area was characterized by domes, sunken land, fissures, sinks, sand blows, and landslides Outside this area damage was less severe, but no less spectacular. Island 94 near Vicksburg, Mississippi, disappeared. The banks of the Mississippi caved as far north as Herculaneum, and those of the Ohio beyond the mouth of the Wabash.

Tremors were felt as far away as Upper Canada in the north, and by the Indians in the upper reaches of the Missouri river. To the southwest the shocks were felt in the Red River towns and along the Washita, some five hundred miles away. Shocks were also felt in New Orleans, 500 miles away, in Detroit, 600 miles, Washington, over 700 miles, and at Boston, 1,100 miles away. Over 1,000,00 square miles, or half of the United States, was so affected the vibrations could be felt without instruments.[3] One old tradition, which I heard at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, says that the earthquake rang the Liberty Bell!

With an earthquake powerful enough to be felt over half of the United States, it is surprising that only one person was killed in the New Madrid area. This is probably because the area was so thinly settled and the relatively few houses and cabins were built so they would give before vibrations rather than resist them. The one death was a woman who was frightened

and ran until she died of fear and exhaustion. Some accounts say that several persons on boats in the river were drowned. We mentioned earlier that Island No. 94 had disappeared completely---at the time of the quake there was apparently a band of river pirates on the island. They were never seen again. Six men were drowned on a flatboat and others were killed when the river banks caved in on their boats.

Many descriptions of the phenomena accompanying the earthquake have an apocalyptic ring to them. Thick darkness covered the area at the time of the shock. Col. Samuel Hammond reports that the air at Herculaneum, well upstream from New Madrid, was filled with smoke or fog so that a house 50 feet away could not be seen.[4] There were strong odors of sulphur and of decay. The source of the odors was probably decaying vegetation in the silt deposits along the river bottoms. When the silt was torn by the quake the gasses trapped in the vegetation were released and added to the terror of the earthquake. In addition, the earthquake apparently triggered huge thunderstorms and the lightning and thunder added to the apocalyptic scenes. Trees were split, forests felled, the Mississippi River flowed upstream for a short time because of the force of the quake acting upon the surface of the water.

The word apocalyptic in the preceding paragraph was chosen deliberately, for it seems that at least some of the people in the New Madrid area feared that the end of the world was at hands. With the earth shaking, trees falling, the sky dark in

middle of the day, smells of sulphur and other gases, a people filled with biblical images of judgment and doom could understandably think that the Day of the Lord had indeed come. At this writing, no first-hand accounts of the earthquake by any of the circuit riders has been found. But did the earthquake have an effect on the church? The remainder of this essay will attempt to find an answer to that question.

The Methodist class at New Madrid was founded in March, 1810 when Jesse Walker and John Scripps traveled across the Great Swamp between Cape Girardeau and New Madrid. Dr. Tucker says that immediately after the earthquake, membership at New Madrid jumped from 30 to 165, a number he says must have included every adult person in the community.[5] The minutes of the General Conference bear this out.[6] The 1811 Minutes, which report the year 1810, do show New Madrid with 30 members. However, the Minutes of 1812 show only 27 members. Since the earthquake did not occur until late in 1811, it is probable that the minutes of 1812 would not as yet reflect any change resulting from the earthquake. In the 1813 Minutes, New Madrid is listed with 165 members, 140 white and 25 colored.

Nor was New Madrid the only community to show an increase in membership. Cape Girardeau, the closest circuit, increased in membership from 76 to 138. Maramack Circuit, which stretched south of the Missouri River and therefore would have been in the area of strong secondary shocks, increased from 147 to 352 members between 1811 and 1812. Even Cold Water, in north St.

Louis County, increased from 87 to 158. All these increases are large enough to be statistically significant. They are not what one would expect in terms of normal increase in a frontier region. Something happened to cause this kind of increase. That something very likely was the fear of both natural phenomena and of the end of the world brought about by the earthquake.

Conventional wisdom says that membership declined as rapidly as it increased.[7] At least one distinguished historian has argued that the sudden bulge in membership was a panic reaction to the earthquake and was followed by a return to old pagan ways.[8] Dr. Tucker goes to some lengths to explain how the decline in membership can be explained by settlers accepting the government offer of free land and moving elsewhere. People moved out of fear and their membership no longer remained in the circuits along the Mississippi. But the decline was a result of moving and not of a return to pagan ways.[9]

A careful study of membership reports to General Conference does not show the drastic drop in membership that these historians assume. New Madrid, which showed 165 members in 1812, still had 119 in 1813 and 136 in 1814. Cape Girardeau declined from 138 in 1812 to 133 in 1814. Cold Water declined only from 158 to 147. Maramack showed the biggest drop, from 352 to 294.[10] Today conferences would rejoice at figures like that, saying they had had the smallest decline in recent years!

But do the statistics support the radical drop in membership theory? I think not. What decline there is can certainly be attributed to movement away from the area, as Dr. Tucker suggested, but not in large numbers. All the circuits in Missouri were on the frontier. One of the most common realities of a frontier population is mobility. The closer to the frontier, the more mobile and restless the population. So it is quite possible that many of those 1812 converts moved on west, taking their new faith with them. Because records are so scanty, there is no way to determine if they started new churches in their new homes. But there is also no evidence that they simply gave up on the church. The whole frontier ambience was one of revival and growth in the church during this time.

Certainly the period after the New Madrid earthquake was a time of turmoil in the west. The great shocks were still occurring when the War of 1812-1814 broke out. While Missouri was not directly involved in major battles, the British did stir up the Indians in the upper Mississippi valley and many settlers in remote cabins moved to larger settlements for safety.

Given the restlessness of the frontier, fear of continuing earthquakes, the outbreak of war, and the offer of free land farther west, it is not surprising that the circuits nearest the epicenter of the earthquake lost members after the great increases of 1812. What is surprising is that none of them lost members in the kind of numbers that would justify the

common claim of a great increase, followed by a great falling off and return to paganism.

NOTES

1. Myron L. Fuller, The New Madrid Earthquake Printed in 1912 by the Government Printing Office. Reprinted 1966 by Ramfire Press, Cape Girardeau. p. 10

2. Ibid

3. Ibid, p. 16-17

4. Ibid, p. 44

5. Frank C. Tucker, The Methodist Church in Missouri, 1789-1939 Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1966, p. 34

6. All references to the General Minutes are to Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol I 1773-1828 New York: Mason & Lane, 1840

7. See, e.g., Tucker, loc cit.

8. Dwight Culmer, A New History of Missouri, p. 79

9. Tucker, loc cit.

10. Minutes of the Annual Conferences, p. 243, 258